

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTONA NEW AUSTRALIAN NAKED-TAILED RAT  
(MELOMYS).

BY REMINGTON KELLOGG.\*

Further study of the rodents collected in Australia by Mr. Charles M. Hoy and presented to the United States National Museum by Dr. William L. Abbott has resulted in the discovery of a form which does not appear to have been previously described.

*Melomys cervinipes albiventer*, subsp. nov.

*Type locality*.—100 miles south of Port Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia [camp located near either Brocks Creek or Douglas River].

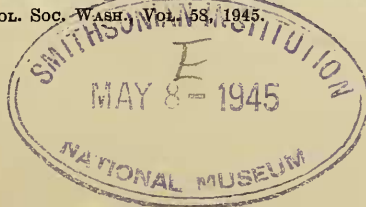
*Type specimen*.—Male adult, skin and skull; No. 237782, U. S. National Museum; collected October 20, 1920, by Charles M. Hoy; original number 861.

*Distribution*.—Known only from the type locality.

*General characters*.—The general coloration is much lighter and duller than the cinnamon-brown *Melomys cervinipes eboreus*, and the hairs of the underparts are pure white to the base in contrast to the slate basal color in *eboreus*. Mammae (inguinal) 0-2=4. Pelage of upperparts soft and dense. Tail longer than head and body. Rows of scales on tail 10 to 12 per 10 mm. Hind foot (c. u.) equivalent to about 21.5 to 24 percent of head and body length. Palate terminating near level of middle of  $M^3$ . Teeth similar to *Melomys cervinipes cervinipes*.  $M^1$  with four roots.  $M^3$  is strongly reduced. Upper molar row equivalent to 18.5 to 20 percent of condylobasal length. Terminal heel of  $M_1$  and  $M_2$  large, equivalent to about half the width of corresponding molar. Bullae strongly reduced, about 15 percent of occipito-nasal length.

*Color* (terms after Ridgway, Color Standards and Color Nomenclature, 1912).—General color of upperparts light tawny-brown, duller in worn pelage; sides lighter, washed with cinnamon buff. Hairs on back and sides slate color on at least the basal half, with 3 to 4 mm. buffy sub-apical band, and tawny-brown tip. Overhairs dark brown. Hairs

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on underparts white to base, sometimes faintly washed with ivory yellow. Upper surfaces of hands and feet light colored, the individual hairs near dull white. Tail bicolored, darker above and lighter below.

*Pelage*.—Rather soft and dense. Dark hairs on upperparts measuring up to 12 mm. in length. Hairs on back and sides averaging about 10 mm. in length. Hairs on hands and feet short, not constituting a dense covering. Tail scantily haired, the bristle hairs light to dark colored, generally 3 in a cluster, and less than the length of a scale. Tail with 10 to 12 rows of scales per 10 mm. Ears brownish, sparsely covered with short hairs externally and about 15 mm. in length from notch (dried).

*Skull*.—Similar to that of *Melomys cervinipes eboreus*, but somewhat smaller, the greatest length (31 to 32.6 mm.) averaging somewhat shorter than *eboreus* (33.7 to 36 mm.); the rostrum is shorter and more robust; and the interparietal tends to be less expanded antero-posteriorly. Supraorbital ridges absent or weakly developed. Anterior edge of zygomatic plate (external to infraorbital foramen) nearly straight and not projecting farther forward than in *eboreus*. Bullae small, about 15 percent of occipito-nasal length. Incisive foramina short, similar to those of *eboreus*, and not extending backward to level of M<sup>1</sup>. Small posterior palatine foramina situated at level of transverse maxillo-palatine suture. Zygomatic arches less widely spreading than in *eboreus*. M<sup>3</sup> varying from 1.2 to 1.3 mm. in length. Upper incisors smooth, rounded in front, and retroflected to the same degree as in *eboreus*.

*Measurements*.—*Type*: Total length, 301 mm.; tail, 165; hind foot (c. u.), 31. One male and two female topotypes, respectively: Total length, 300, 258, and 249; tail, 161, 133, and 133; hind foot, 30, 28, and 28. Skull (type): Greatest length, 31.5; condylobasal length, 30.7; zygomatic width, 17; interorbital width, 5; length of nasals, 11; palatilar length, 14; anterior palatine foramina, 5.1; length of bulla, 4.6; length of upper molar row, 5.8; length of mandible, 20. One male and two female topotypes, respectively: Greatest length, 32.6, 31.8, and 31; condylobasal length, 31.8, 29.7, and 29.3; zygomatic width, 16.2, 15.2, and 15.9; interorbital width, 5, 5, and 4.8; length of nasals, 11.8, 11, and 11; palatilar length, 14.5, 14, and 14; anterior palatine foramina, 5, 5, and 5.2; length of bulla, 5, 4.5, and 4.9; length of upper molar row, 5.9, 6.1, and 5.7; length of mandible, 18.5, 17.6, and 17.6.

*Remarks*.—The four skins referred to this form have been compared with a series of eight *Melomys cervinipes eboreus* obtained by Hoy on the Atherton Tableland, 9 miles south of Ravenshoe. All of these specimens from the Atherton Tableland have the slate basal coloration showing through on the underparts, the individual hairs being slate color on about the basal three-fourths and tipped terminally with whitish or pinkish buff. The pure white coloration of the underparts of *albiventer* is thus quite unlike that of both *cervinipes* and *eboreus*. On the other hand the external dimensions of *albiventer* are quite similar to *eboreus* and *cervinipes*. The skull of the white-bellied *Melomys banfieldi* is much larger than that of *albiventer* and the hind foot of the white-bellied

*Melomys murinus* is considerably smaller. Both *Melomys littoralis* and *Melomys australius* have a smaller hind foot than *albiventer*. The form here described is referred to the *cervinipes* group chiefly on account of skull and tooth characters as well as similar external dimensions.

*Specimens examined*.—Total number, 7,<sup>1</sup> from the type locality.

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<sup>1</sup>Two represented by skulls only.